

# The Watchman and Southron.

SUMTER WATCHMAN, Established April, 1880.

"Be Just and Fear not—Let all the ends Thou Aims't at be thy Country's, Thy God's and Truth's."

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## BANK NEPOTISM CHARGED.

### LEGISLATURE COMMITTEE GETS AT ROOT OF CLEMSON TROUBLE.

Columbia, Jan. 17.—The report of the legislative committee consisting of Senator T. I. Rogers and Representatives E. W. Duvall and L. M. Lawson, charged with the examination of the State's Educational Institutions, is one of the most interesting documents presented for the consideration of the legislature at this session. The portion of the report dealing with conditions at Clemson College is slightly sensational in character in that it is charged gross nepotism prevails and that the trustees have interfered in the management of the college. The letter of President Mell is especially interesting. The report on conditions at Clemson is as follows:

In view of the fact that a great deal has been said in the press of the State as to conditions at Clemson College, and also in view of the fact that such a large sum of money is expended there by its board of trustees, your committee felt it incumbent upon them, as far as time allowed, to make a somewhat thorough investigation. It was found that there has been a decided lack of cooperation between the trustees and the president and between the president and commandant as to the serious detriment of the institution. The retiring president feels that the trustees have usurped his powers and by interference with the duties of the institution, which are directly the duties of the president—such as discipline of cadets, orders to his subordinates, taking charge of buying the books of the library, and dictating the curriculum—made a successful administration impossible for him.

The trustees feel that the president has failed to exert the authority given him, and by this failure has made it imperative for them to exert activities along lines they would have been glad to leave to him. Regardless of who is right in these claims, your committee feels that for the future good of Clemson, it is necessary that a strong man be elected president; that he be made the real head of the institution; that he be given all the powers to enable him to thoroughly control and operate the entire institution. As an evidence that it is the intention of the trustees to remedy the above evil, we quote the following resolution, which was passed by a meeting in July, 1903.

"That a committee of three be appointed by the chairman to take into consideration the revision of the by-laws and, in consultation with the president of the college, report such changes as in their judgment are necessary to secure the following results: 1. Define the powers and duties of the president of the college, so that he shall be the absolute head of the college, to be held responsible for its satisfactory working and success. 2. To define the relation of the trustees of the college and their duties as inspectors and legislators, seeking to secure the best results at a minimum of expense; the idea being that the trustees shall direct and control the policy of the college under general rules and regulations, while the faculty shall carry them out under orders of the president of the college, who shall alone act as intermediary between the trustees and the various heads of departments, and shall be held responsible for results. 3. To secure the co-ordination and co-operation of the various departments of the college with a view to economy and efficiency and a clear definition of duties of the various officers of the college."

Under this resolution a committee was appointed and has reported a new set of by-laws. These have been adopted by the board, and we hope they will prove satisfactory.

We append to this report a communication from Dr. Mell, retiring president, furnished us upon our request that he give us his views as to

how the future welfare of the college could be best subserved. After receiving this communication from Dr. Mell, we invited the present and also the former president of the board of trustees to a conference with us, and asked them about the matters referred to by Dr. Mell, concerning all of which they gave us freely and frankly, full information. We find that there was a woeful lack of appreciation between the board, or some members of the board, and the president. The president attributing his partial failure to make his administration a success to the interference by certain of the trustees, and the trustees attributing the same to the incompetency of Dr. Mell as an administrative officer. We are not in a position to render a decided opinion upon all the matters in question, but we believe there is truth in both contentions, in some respects.

It seems to be conceded by all that on account of the reasons for its establishment, and the manner of its support, Clemson should be primarily an agricultural college, and it seems to your committee that the authorities have failed to obtain the desired result along these lines. The trustees to whom we have talked seem to fully realize this, and assure us that their plans for the future embrace a determination to spare no effort or money in making the agricultural department all that could be desired.

We recommend that section 1312 of volume 1, Code of 1902, in reference to the meetings of the board of trustees, be repealed. The board cannot properly perform the many duties of directing a large institution by having only two meetings a year. The treasurer's report of Clemson College shows that the trustees receive pay for more than two meetings a year, and, in our opinion, the section should be repealed, and thus make clear their right to do so.

This section was originally a part of a special act for the purpose of winding up the affairs of the old agricultural department of the State, which duties were imposed upon the trustees of Clemson College, and was not intended to apply to the meetings of the board for other purposes. But when the Code of 1902 was adopted, it was incorporated in the article on Clemson College, and as it stands therein and without looking into its history, it would appear to apply to any meetings of the board. We do not believe this was ever intended, and therefore recommend its repeal.

We renew the following recommendation of the last report of this committee:

"This committee has for several years called the attention of the General Assembly to the fact that a majority of the board of trustees of Clemson College is not under the control of the State; and while this committee has no evidence whatever that the trustees appointed under the Clemson Will are not just as loyal, just as competent, and just as watchful of the interests of the State, yet we believe the sooner the State can by any means whatever get entire control of appointing the board of trustees, the better it will be for the welfare of Clemson College. We call the attention of the General Assembly to the former reports made by this committee, and recommend that steps be taken to ascertain if under the Clemson Will there is any possible way for the State to obtain entire control. While there has been no friction between the trustees under the Clemson Will and the trustees of the State, yet we believe that it would be best for the State of South Carolina and the college, even if it should cost an appropriation of an amount equal to the original valuation of the Clemson bequest, for the State to make the expenditure and gain entire control of the appointment of the trustees."

Your committee refers you to the report of the treasurer as to the expenditure of money by this institution. It is impossible for us, in the very short time given to this investigation, to go into each expenditure, but as far as we can judge, they are correct, and the books are well kept.

We do not think it advisable for the Legislature to take any radical action at this time, as we hope that, with a new set of by-laws and a new president, conditions will soon be vastly improved.

T. I. ROGERS.

On the part of the Senate

E. W. DUVAL,

L. M. LAWSON,

On the part of the House.

EXHIBIT.

Senator T. I. Rogers and Representatives L. M. Lawson and E. W. Duvall, Committee of the General Assembly:

Sirs—In accordance with your request, I furnish you with the following information concerning the con-

ditions which have prevailed at Clemson Agricultural College for some years, resulting in serious opposition to good government and the proper management of the affairs of the institution.

1. The board of trustees have in the past interfered too much with the duties of administration, which belong in all well-regulated institutions to the president of the college and his colleagues. The committee of trustees have been accustomed to meet frequently at the college for the purpose of enforcing the orders of the board, instead of leaving to the president of the college this responsibility, which by right belongs to his office. For illustration I cite the following instances:

The farmer directed by a committee of trustees without consultation with the president of the college.

A committee of trustees taking minute charge of all details of work and construction and cultivation of crops on the Coast Experiment Station, near Summerville, when all such matters should be under the president of the college and in direct charge of the director of the Experiment Station.

Prior to April, 1908, interfering with the discipline of the corps of cadets by setting the action of the faculty aside in more than one instance. A resolution passed in March, 1908, however, corrected this evil for the present and enabled the discipline committee to control the situation when the cadets left the college April, 1908.

The budget taken out of the hands of the president of the college and placed in charge of committees of trustees who have, prior to December, 1909, consulted directly with the officials who are under the president. At the last meeting of the board an effort was made to correct this practice.

The finance committee of the board assuming by board order and, by the authority of the by-laws, full charge of the college library, in all of its interests, ordering the books and making rules and regulations for the proper conduct of the parties who frequent the library. This duty of purchasing books and making rules for order should belong to a committee of the faculty, assisted by the librarian. Under the faculty management the library has grown into one of the most valuable collection of books to be found in South Carolina. This new action of the board has been made part of the by-laws where it will require nine votes of the trustees to correct.

The repair of buildings placed in the charge of a committee of trustees when more effective work can be accomplished and the buildings kept in much better condition if the president was charged with this duty. This is customary in most colleges.

The orders of the board are at times promulgated by committees directly to sub-officials and the president often is embarrassed by not being informed concerning these orders until he hears of them through the subordinate. This practice destroys the president's authority with the officials.

The walks, roads and management of the campus are now in charge of a committee of trustees, who direct all matters regarding the improvement of the grounds, even to the details. The president of the college has been added to this committee, but his influence is made small by the requirements imposed.

On January 28, 1909, a committee from the State Farmers' Union visited the college to examine into its working. My plans were made to entertain these gentlemen, but these plans were frustrated by the appearance of Mr. R. W. Simpson, a member of the board, who took these farmers in charge, and I did not have the opportunity of presenting the college work to these visitors. Mr. Simpson gave instructions to the farmer in charge of the carriages and ordered other officials in regard to the care of these visitors and in all other respects assumed the prerogatives and duties of the president of the college in the entertainment of and the direction of these farmers through the college.

Serious interference with the president's secretary, who is a relative of a member of the board, and causing an unfortunate condition in my office which I have found it impossible to overcome, so that a competent secretary could be secured to do the work of the office. My appeal to the board to allow me to have absolute control of the secretary in my office because of the confidential nature of the work, has been unavailing. I found it was necessary to call for the secretary's resignation for the accomplishment of good service for the college. The board of trustees have set my action aside and the young lady has

been given leave of absence until "the new president is elected." (See board of trustees' minutes, December, 1909.)

The committee of trustees insisting that the arrangement of the subjects into courses shall first receive the approval of the board of trustees before they can be placed in the catalogue is bad legislation. This duty belongs alone to the faculty. (See By-Laws.)

A committee of trustees taking charge of farmers' institutes and directing all the details of the work of sending to the farmers the instruction the college has to offer. This work belongs to the salaried officers of the institution under the general direction of the president.

Petitions and papers of every kind intended for the board of trustees have in many instances reached the board direct and not through the president's office. This practice has been sanctioned by the trustees as individuals. The president should be the officer to bring every thing from the officials to the board, so that he may be well-informed concerning all matters in and about the college.

The board of trustees are meeting too often, and I think the State law is being violated in these frequent meetings. There would be less chance for interruption as above given if the meetings were only two each year. The Code says on this subject:

"For the purpose of carrying out the duties hereby devolved upon them the said board of trustees shall meet at the call of the Governor, and at such time and place as he may designate. They shall receive no compensation, but shall be allowed their actual expenses for not exceeding two meetings in one year while engaged in the duties of the board imposed upon them by this article." (See Code of 1902, Section 1312.)

In 1908-1909 the board of trustees met on: July 14, 1908, Sept. 1, 1908, Dec. 9, 1908, March, 1908.

In 1909-1910 the board of trustees met on: March 1909, July 8, 1909, August 12, 1909, Sept. 15, 1909, Dec. 2, 1909.

Special attention is called to the clause in the above extract from the Code in regard to the expenses of the trustees while engaged in transacting the business of the college. And the committee of the General Assembly is directed to the vouchers turned in by the member from Pendleton for his expenses who comes to the college in his buggy and has his horse fed by the college, and the expenses of the members from Greenville and from Walhalla. The expenses of the last two are reasonable. The comparison is interesting on the question of expenses. (See pages 131, 132, 133, 134, 135 of Annual Report of the College Treasurer, a copy of which accompanies this paper.)

Nepotism is a serious drawback to good and efficient growth in the college, and there should be some remedy for this evil. The following trustees have relatives on the official force of Clemson Agricultural College:

R. W. Simpson—Three sons-in-law on the faculty.

W. W. Bradley—A brother on the faculty.

J. E. Wannamaker—A brother-in-law on the faculty; a nephew on the station staff; a niece in the office of the president; a relative in the treasurer's office.

W. D. Evans—A son in the treasurer's office; a son holding the position of fertilizer inspector.

Alan Johnstone—A nephew on the faculty.

Three other members of the college force are supposed to be related to trustees by marriage, but I am not in possession of accurate information on this score.

Since the college was opened for students, in 1893, the board of trustees have appointed twenty-one of their relatives to important positions in the college. There are now eleven relatives on the present force. The board have also appointed two of their members to good salaried places in the institution within the past eight years.

The practice of nepotism has caused much of the troubles and disturbances during the administration of my predecessors and during my term of service as president. As an evidence of the wilting influence nepotism has on the official action of the board of trustees, I will cite three instances which came in my own experience in my efforts to equip the college with strong and capable officers: March, 1908, I recommended to the board of trustees a list of mathematical experts for the chair which had been vacated by the death of Prof. P. T. Brodie several months before. I headed this list with the name of Dr. Otto Dunkel, who was then associate professor of mathematics in the University of Missouri. (See attached letter from Dr.

Dunkel.) Dr. Dunkel was a native of Virginia, a graduate of the University of Virg. with the degree of Master of Arts, a graduate of Harvard University with the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, and also a graduate in mathematics in Göttingen University of Germany. He spoke German and French fluently and had a reading knowledge of Spanish and Italian. While abroad he studied mathematics under some of the best mathematicians both in Germany and in France. There were two other strong men on my list, but I endorsed as my first choice Dr. Dunkel. At Prof. Martin's request I submitted his application to the board for the chair. I did not consider Prof. Martin equal to Dr. Dunkel in mathematical training. After several ballots the board failed to elect anyone, and after transacting other business adjourned to meet in July, at which time Prof. Martin was elected, although Prof. Dunkel's name was submitted by me again. Prof. Martin is a son-in-law of R. W. Simpson, the former president of the board and a life trustee. My work for the college from that time became greatly hampered and interrupted by serious difficulties thrown in my way by the friends of Mr. Simpson on the board of trustees. Prof. Martin was elected assistant professor of mathematics before I became president of the college.

In 1908 I recommended to the board the election of a chemist for the expert on the station staff. My list contained a gentleman who had received fifteen years' training in chemical experiments and was familiar with difficult station researches. A nephew of a member of the board was nominated by Mr. Simpson and was elected in a few minutes afterwards. This nephew was but recently graduated from Clemson and was without experience concerning station experiments. He was a bright young man, but could not in any particular compare with the gentleman whom I had nominated, in age, experience and educational advantages.

In my efforts to control my stenographer, who is a niece of a trustee, I was greatly embarrassed by the board stepping in and siding with her in her insubordination. I found her in the office when I accepted the presidency in 1902. She has been given leave of absence until the new president shall be elected, and the inference is that she will be returned to the president's office with a salary increased from \$650 to \$900. Because of this action of the board last September I have been unable to secure a competent assistant who will consent to take the position with the uncertainty hanging over it. I have appointed eight young men since last September, but all have declined after looking into the situation. I have called the attention of the board to this unfortunate condition, but they have declined to reconsider their determination to have the niece returned to the president's office after I retire.

While I was in controversy with the last commandant in the matter of who should discharge the duties of the president's office, Rev. Coke D. Mann, a member of the board of trustees, published an article in the newspapers condemning me in my efforts to control the affairs of the college, and yet he had not availed himself of the opportunity to inform himself concerning my side of the matters under consideration. Mr. Mann was on the jury which was afterwards called on to decide on the merits of the case. By his conduct he had rendered himself unfit to sit on the case, but he took part in the discussions which occurred in the board and cast his vote against me in the final action of the trustees.

The voting of \$4,000 to compensate members of the board of trustees (with their law partners) for defending the college in the dike litigation is worthy of consideration by the committee of the General Assembly.

In my efforts to develop the college into a high-grade institution of science, engineering and agriculture, I had worked out, with the assistance of my faculty, seven courses of study for the students to pursue, and three of these were for the agricultural students. But the trustees at their meeting in December last cut out all but one of these agricultural courses, because they thought the Farmer's Union demanded such to be done. The following table will show that if the hours of recitation as now assigned to each subject are retained. In the one course of agriculture demanded by the By-Laws just revised, it will be impossible for any boy to master the subjects or even do half the work. It will be necessary, therefore, for the faculty to reduce the hours considerably on each subject, and, under such a scheme, the student will obtain only a mere super-

ficial knowledge of the subjects of college education. While the topics are distributed over the three courses given in the present catalogue, the student is given latitude for selection and at the same time he receives a large instruction on agriculture and allied subjects. The cutting out of the agricultural courses is a misfortune and I am satisfied that time and wise counsel will show the board of trustees the wisdom of restoring these courses, and to leave this matter of the arrangement of the subjects into courses in the hands of the faculty who are better qualified by training and experience to adjust the subjects in the best classification for good results.

When I tendered my resignation, in July, 1909, the board of trustees were informed that my reasons for resigning were because:

1. The frequent interference in the administration of the college affairs by the trustees.

2. Selecting the officers of the college without allowing the president a large share in determining who shall fill these positions. This will avoid nepotism.

3. The need of reorganization of the military department so that the recent attitude of the last commandant against the president may not again occur.

The board of trustees refused to accept my resignation and adjourned to meet in August. Before adjourning, however, they passed the following resolutions:

"That a committee of three be appointed by the chairman to take into consideration the revision of the by-laws, and, in consultation with the president of the college, report such changes as in their judgment are necessary to secure the following results: 1. Define the powers and duties of the president of the college, so that he shall be the absolute head of the college, to be held responsible for its satisfactory working and success. 2. To define the relation of the trustees of the college and their duties as inspectors and legislators, seeking to secure the best results at a minimum of expense; the idea being that the trustees shall direct and control the policy of the college under general rules and regulations, while the faculty shall carry them out under the orders of the president of the college, who shall alone act as the intermediary between the trustees and the various heads of departments, and shall be held responsible for results. 3. To secure the co-ordination and co-operation of the various departments of the college with a view to economy and efficiency and a clear definition of duties of the various officers of the college."

Mr. Alan Johnstone, the chairman, appointed on this committee the following trustees: Senator B. R. Tillman, Messrs. R. W. Simpson and W. W. Bradley.

I desire to say to the committee of the General Assembly that the following members of the board of trustees have stood by me in my efforts to build Clemson Agricultural College into a high-grade institution of agriculture, engineering and science, viz.: Senator B. R. Tillman, Messrs. R. E. Bowen, M. L. Donaldson, E. H. Rawl, Jesse H. Hardin, John G. Richards. Mr. R. I. Manning has been on the board of trustees so short a time I cannot speak intelligently concerning his probable attitude on the questions disturbing the college. I believe, however, that he will take a stand with the gentlemen mentioned above in all those matters which are for the well-being and best interests of Clemson Agricultural College. Mr. J. E. Wannamaker has on many occasions supported the president in his plans for the best interest of the college; like the other gentlemen, he is an independent thinker, as he should be, but I think his sympathy has been with the president when he thought this officer was right. Mr. Wannamaker, however, has several relatives on the college force and I do not know what would be his attitude if the test was made.

In submitting this paper I wish it to be distinctly understood that I have endeavored to withdraw all personality from the accounts I have given, and I would be greatly disturbed if I thought that I had said anything which would bring trouble upon innocent parties. I desire also to say that my colleagues on the faculty and on the college force of officers have stood by me loyally in the work of the college, and I have no criticism to make against any one of these gentlemen; they are all loyal to the college and its interests. If the evils I have tried to relate in this paper are corrected I am confident Clemson Agricultural College will grow into the finest institution in the entire South.

Respectfully, P. H. MELL.